



Analysis Note

24 September 1985
FB M 85-10045

Moscow on U.S.-Soviet Relations

17-23 September

Soviet media mounted a broadside attack on the United States with the apparent aim of raising doubts about Washington's earnestness in preparing for the November summit. Soviet criticism focused on U.S. arms policies, in particular concerning production of chemical weapons and criticizing the U.S. ASAT test. Soviet commentators also lashed out at the President for his public remarks about the Soviet Union and accused the Administration of conducting a campaign of hatred against the USSR.

U.S.-Soviet Relations

Soviet media accused the United States of seeking to worsen bilateral relations by rejecting Soviet arms control initiatives while deliberately slandering the Soviet Union:

- Why are the President and those in his entourage who are so assiduous in tossing him absurdities conjured out of this air under the guise of "quotations from Lenin" so persistent in their ignorance? This is all the more natural a question in that the fomenting of a campaign of hostility toward the USSR, and attempts to denigrate socialism and peace-loving Soviet policies, are being undertaken at a time when it would seem that one could expect a businesslike and serious response to Soviet initiatives. (Yuriy Kornilov, TASS, 19 September)
- Washington is unleashing a truly rabid anti-Soviet campaign. Moreover, Washington is taking one demonstrative act after another, showing that the U.S. leadership does not even want to hear of ending the arms race, and, what is more, intends to step it up. . . . Concrete measures [aimed at ending the arms race] by the Soviet Union have evidently been concealed from U.S. public opinion by the U.S. psychological warfare services. They have been buried under heaps of the most monstrous fabrications of anti-Soviet propaganda about an imaginary Soviet threat. (Yuriy Zhukov, Soviet television, 21 September)

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Despite the stridency of its attacks, Moscow continued to hold out the prospect of improved relations. The visit to Moscow by HUD Secretary Pierce received favorable treatment in Soviet media, which portrayed it as an example of effective cooperation:

- The government of the USSR greets the participants in the fourth session of the Soviet-American joint commission convened in Moscow within the framework of the bilateral Soviet-American agreement on cooperation in the sphere of housing construction. . . . The Soviet Union has invariably favored and continues to favor stable and mutually advantageous cooperation with the United States in various spheres in the interests of peace and the improvement of Soviet-American relations. It positively assesses the experience of mutual exchanges and contacts accumulated by our countries. (Message from the USSR Council of Ministers, Pravda, 17 September)

Approach to Reagan-Gorbachev Talks

Soviet commentary portrayed the Administration as unable to define specific positions for the November summit because of internal differences, with Secretary Weinberger leading the charge to undercut the meeting:

- The press writes of the absence of any precise position on the American side because of differences at the highest level. It is reported, for example, that Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger has postponed a planned visit to Asia in order to remain in Washington during the preparations for the November meetings. Weinberger is in principle opposed to holding the talks, and he is not the only one. (Gennadiy Gerasimov, Soviet television, 22 September)
- It is reported that [Weinberger] has even put off his trip to Asia planned for next month in order to be in Washington during preparations for the summit-level meeting in Geneva, in order, as the U.S. television company CBS reported, not to allow the adherents of compromise to gain the upper hand. (Aleksandr Zholkver, Moscow domestic radio, 22 September)

Geneva Arms Talks

Moscow gave wide domestic and international dissemination to the following commentary which capsulizes its portrayal of U.S. tactics:

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- The American delegation has brought no new proposals to Geneva. That has been admitted by President Reagan at a news conference in Washington. He made it clear that the United States does not intend to discuss seriously the problem of the nonmilitarization of space either at the Geneva talks or at the coming Soviet-American summit. The President said the Strategic Defense Initiative, that is the American program of preparing for "Star Wars," is not a subject of bargaining. (Yuriy Soltan, Moscow radio in English, 19 September)

Reaction to ASAT Test

Moscow sharpened its attacks on the 13 September test of an ASAT weapon, portraying it as an attempt to circumvent the ABM Treaty and warning of a negative effect on the Geneva summit:

- Lying concealed behind the U.S. testing of the antisatellite ASAT system is the Pentagon's striving not only to acquire weapons for antisatellite warfare in the immediate future but also, under the guise of testing antisatellite systems, to master antimissile systems of air and other basing modes that are banned under the ABM Treaty. . . . The U.S. test of an ASAT system has not only been a "test of strength" at the Geneva talks. It has also been an obvious attempt by certain American quarters to damage the process of preparations for the forthcoming Soviet-American summit meeting next November and aggravate the world atmosphere even further. (Pravda editorial article, 17 September)

- The test of an antisatellite system by the Americans is an event of a pronounced political nature. It is yet another signal, yet another demonstration of the hardline, uncompromising policy of the present American Administration on the eve of the Soviet-U.S. summit meeting. This is, in essence, a victory for the hawks in official Washington and a defeat for reason. (Nikolay Shishlin, Moscow domestic radio, 20 September)

Chemical Weapons

Moscow appeared intent on giving new impetus to its criticism of the U.S. program to develop binary chemical weapons. A 19 September press conference, held in the wake of Moscow's endorsement of a chemical weapon-free zone in central Europe, raised the charge that binary chemical weapons can be used selectively against different ethnic groups:

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- Binary chemical weapons occupy one of the most important positions in the overall rearmament program of the United States. And these weapons and the program for creating them are a national priority. It must be said that chemical weapons in general, and binary weapons in particular, are of an offensive nature. Furthermore, U.S. specialists believe that binary chemical weapons could become the main weapons in conducting combat operations with the use of nuclear weapons. (Maj. Gen. Yu. Lebedev, Moscow press conference, Soviet television, 19 September)

- The binary concept springs from the possibility of quickly obtaining new molecular structures of poisonous substances, that is, of changing the final poisonous substances, overcoming intelligence, treatment, and protection systems. This means putting the opponent in a defenseless position in the face of the new weapon. Finally, it is possible to strike individual ethnic groups selectively. In principle, it is possible to carry out a strike against ethnic groups according to command. (Maj. Gen. A.D. Kuntsevich, Moscow press conference, Soviet television, 19 September)

Treatment of U.S. Leaders

Soviet media criticized President Reagan for his recent statements on bilateral relations and gave particular prominence to his remarks on SDI. At the same time, commentators portrayed an embattled President, under pressure at home and abroad. Moscow's sharpest criticism was directed not at the President, however, but at Secretary Weinberger:

- President Reagan is now on the political defensive, in particular at home against American critics. Some of these grieve that he is losing propaganda points in the process of preparations for the [summit] meeting. Others offer more serious reproaches to the effect that the American position, as it is being formulated at present, is clouding the Geneva prospects. (Stanislav Kondrashov, Soviet television, 21 September)

- More and more of us all over the world see the "we have more freedom than you" response for what it really is--a clumsy attempt to distract from the substance of what Mikhail Gorbachev said and divert people's thoughts from the obvious, namely that the Administration has nothing to say to justify its position, and nothing speaks louder for this point than President Reagan's dead end four-worder, SDI is not negotiable. (Vladimir Posner, Moscow radio in English, 19 September)

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● The latest "week of hate" for our country has just ended. It was opened by the White House incumbent, who on the radio last Monday came out with "sayings of Lenin" concocted in Washington. And Defense Secretary Weinberger imparted his new anti-Soviet fabrications to his fellow citizens under cover of "hate week." (A. Palladin, Izvestiya, 17 September)

● U.S. Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger, the well-known hawk and advocate of the massive buildup of U.S. military might, is one of the sponsors and chief orchestrators of the current anti-Soviet campaign. . . . Weinberger's assistant and rabid anticommunist Richard Perle echoes his chief, launching persistent slanderous attacks on the USSR. (TASS, 21 September)

"PENTAGON TRANSFORMATION"



Pravda, 17 September 1985

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